

THE CORRESPONDENT.

MAGNA EST VERITAS ET PREVALEBIT.

BY GEORGE HOUSTON, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

THE HISTORY OF THE GARMENT THAT CAME FROM HEAVEN.

Concluded from page 259.

But neither this reasoning, nor the terror of the laws could completely check the cavils of the infidels. These sceptical gentlemen declared, that a good and wise God could not have made the human form so completely deformed as the advocates of the celestial garment pretended; that to call the human form bad, was to pronounce the works of God imperfect; that as the wisdom of God was clearly seen in nearly every thing that was made, it was fair to infer that he had given the human body the best possible form, and that it could not be improved by any alteration which the wisdom of man could suggest. The reverend clergy found much difficulty from these arguments. As they asserted that God was wise and good, it seemed unreasonable to declare that his works were bad. They assembled a council to devise answers to these objections, and the following doctrines were promulgated. In the beginning, according to the decision of this council, God created man after his own perfect likeness. He gave him four arms, a conical head, a hunch back, and sharp pointed feet. He placed him in a beautiful garden, in which were placed all the different trees that grow upon the earth, and gave him liberty to eat the fruit of each, except that of one tree which stood in the midst of the garden; the fruit of which, though good to eat and fair to behold, was forbidden man under the penalty of instant death. That man, regardless of the command of his creator, eat of the forbidden tree, when, lo! he did not die, but his form was changed, and he assumed the wretched shape which we now behold. This new doctrine appeared to the pious to account satisfactorily for the depravity of the form of man, and as new penalties were enacted against heretics, and infidels, the enemies of the garment were, for a time, compelled to make a secret of their opinion, and the new religion was thought to be insubvertibly established. The doctrines pronounced, were received by all ranks: that the reader may judge with what reasons, I subjoin a specimen from a sermon now in my possession.

My beloved hearers, if any one of you has any doubt concerning the magnitude of the evils, brought upon us by the transgression of our first parents, let him consider the inconveniences to which he is every

day subjected, through the defects of his present shape; let him remember how vexatious are the sleeves which he hath no arms to fill, how his feet are pinched and injured by shoes to which they are not adapted; and let him consider how convenient these garments would be, if the shape of man was such as God originally created it. As our feet are, we are afflicted with corns upon the toes, and numerous sores, all of which arise from ill setting shoes: were our feet such as they should be, our shoes would cease to be inconvenient. Let him remember, also, the evils that arise from our misshapen heads, which fit not our hats, and are incapable of feeling happiness.

Let us pray, then, dearly beloved, that the form of our bodies may be changed, that we may receive the form of beauty which the God of heaven gave our first parents. Let us pray that our heads may become conical, that we may have four arms, that protuberances may grow upon our backs, and that the ends of our feet may become sharp. At the same time that we beseech those things of a merciful God, let us endeavor to do our part in effecting the change. Let us wear the clothes adapted to our original shape, which our lord has directed us to wear; let us repent grievously of our unholy forms, and if we do not attain a perfect shape in this life, we shall prepare ourselves to receive it in the kingdom of heaven. The additional arms which we are to receive, and the hunch upon our backs, may not shew themselves in this world, but they will be prepared in our bodies, ready to burst forth when God shall take us to himself: and though our heads may not become conical, they will be so changed as to assume that shape, when the world shall know us no more. Yes, my brethren, our prayers, our obedience, our repentance will produce this change, and when we put on immortality, we shall find ourselves clothed with a beauty like that of God.

But if we disobey the command of God—if we wear clothes which he has forbidden us to wear—clothes adapted to our present shape, and not to that which we ought to assume—if we neglect to pray to God, and repent not of the iniquity of our forms, miserable indeed will be our fate when eternity shall open on us. Heaven will have no place for our souls: but we shall be drawn from the presence of God, and be confined with misshapen devils in the lowest pits of hell, and eternity itself shall not bring the hour of our deliverance.

These were the doctrines which were taught from the pulpit, and believed by the people; but it may be well to illustrate them still farther, by giving a form of prayer, adopted by the church, which is also in my possession.

Perfectly beautiful, conical headed, four armed, sharp footed, hunch backed, God, we desire to humble ourselves before thee, to confess the iniquity of our own shapes, and to adore the perfection of thine. We believe, O God, that thy head is shaped like a loaf of sugar, that thou hast four arms, that a tailor's goose is a model of thy feet, that the protuberance on thy back exceedeth that on the back of a camel, and that its altitude is greater than the altitude of thy head. We believe, O God, that this form is perfectly holy, and perfectly beautiful, while our shapes are corrupt, and fit only for the bottomless pit. We pray thee, most adorable, to look with compassion on our condition, and prepare us for

thy kingdom, by giving us forms like thine. Let us not go down to hell with round heads, two arms, and straight backs, but have mercy upon us, and pardon the iniquity brought on us by the disobedience of our first parents. Enable us to obey all thy ordinances; to wear with patience, the clothes which thou hast commanded us to wear; and, finally, to be received with new bodies into thy kingdom; and to thee shall the glory and the praise be given.

From this prayer, and sermon, and from what has been said above, the reader may obtain an adequate idea of the religion of the garment. That religion had become so well established, at the time of which I speak, that its enemies had never been able to overturn it, had not lamentable divisions arisen among its professors, which gave new hopes to unbelievers, and defeated the schemes of its clergy. The tailor who first invented, made, and vended the sacred coat, left his followers certain directions, (which were afterwards put into writing) concerning the manner in which that precious gift of God should be worn. In the interpretation of these directions, most of his disciples disagreed, and numerous sects were formed, differing more or less from each other in their opinions; but the most important dispute was the following. Among other things, the tailor had commanded that his followers should *always* wear the coat he had left them. Some of his disciples maintained, that always here meant, whenever they should wear a coat, and that they were not in duty bound to wear this garment when in bed, or when oppressed by heat; they likewise affirmed, that it was perfectly lawful for them to pull off an old, or a filthy one, for the purpose of putting a clean, or a new one. But there were many who would admit of no such licence. These pious reasoners affirmed, that always must mean always; that every person who pulled off his coat, either for the purpose of sleeping, or for fear of heat, disobeyed the mandate of God given by the mouth of the prophet tailor, directing men always to wear the coat which God had provided for him: they also averred, that whoever pulled off his coat to put on another, was guilty of an act of disobedience; because let him hasten ever so much to put on the new coat after taking off the old, he must be for an instant without the holy garment upon his back. In conformity to these principles, they wore the same coat night and day, without any cleansing, until it was deemed no longer fit for use. A new one was then provided and put on over the old, when the shears were applied to the inner garment, and it was drawn out by pieces from under the other.

The disputes between the parties professing the different opinions, became so rancorous that each resorted to persecution whenever it possessed the power, and the martyrs of bigotry became so numerous, that every nation of believers was threatened with ruin. But in the progress of time, divisions arose in the ranks of each of these parties, and numerous smaller sects were formed. At first, severe laws were enacted by the dominant sects in each nation, against all heretics of whatever name but it was soon found that no sect possessed a majority of the people, and that whatever doctrine was supported by the government, the body of the nation would be against it. In this state of things, religious toleration was indispensable; all the laws against heresy were repealed, and others

were enacted, permitting every man to speak his opinions freely, without fear of a gibbet or a dungeon.

The infidels, profiting by this liberty, boldly attacked the religion of the sacred garment; they affirmed that the tailor so much adored, had never risen from the dead, and that the coat, which he pretended to have received from heaven, was a coat of his own invention. They combatted the doctrines which his followers had introduced, by the shafts of ridicule, and by all the armor of reason. The downfall of the holy religion of the garment was soon effected. Its supporters, perceiving the approach of their ruin, united for a time against its enemies; but they united too late. The reins of government were already in the hands of their adversaries; the people were rapidly forsaking their cause, and their labors were closed by a few vain prayers, that God would restore them to their former power, and save the faith from ruin.

At the present day, the religion of the holy garment is completely destroyed; the people that once professed it, remember it now only as a folly of their fathers; the opinion generally prevails among them, that conical heads are no better than the heads which nature has given us, that two arms are as good as four, that feet with toes are no evil, and prayers for hunchbacks have ceased altogether.

DESULTORY THOUGHTS.

Mr. Editor—We are told that a Grecian philosopher was moved to laughter by the follies of mankind, while another wept as he contemplated the effects which they produced. The latter certainly had the best heart, though we cannot deny that the former had abundant cause for his mirth. The people of antiquity had their follies and vices, as well as the moderns; though it may well be questioned whether these are so gross in the comparison as our pious teachers would fain persuade us; and if Democritus were alive at the present day, and could hear a fanatical preacher utter his sentiments respecting God and a future world, his mirth would probably give place to a feeling of pity and amazement. He would be compelled to admit, that however monstrous might have been the aberrations of his contemporaries from truth and sense, it was reserved for a succeeding era, to exhibit men in a state of the most deplorable idiocy and mental vassalage—bound willing victims to the car of an immoral and debasing superstition. He would soon perceive the difference between the mild and graceful mythology of Pagan Greece, and the gloomy and ferocious system of modern theology; the one being almost inoperative, except so far as it tended to furnish subjects for the poet, the sculptor, and the painter; whilst the other had from the very first, been the direct and positive source of misery and crime without a parallel.

Let us place in the hands of the "laughing philosopher," the history of the religion which has superceded that of Grecian antiquity—the records of its bloody triumphs, remorseless cruelties, and fruitless polemical controversies—let us read to him its leading doctrines, and give him all the evidence upon the question of its authenticity—what would he say, what could he think? And when he should be farther more assured.

that the professors and advocates of this system were in the habit of instituting comparisons, and deducing their own superiority to the nations which admitted the mythology—could he credit the assertion, and yet restrain his visibility? If he could, then his commiseration for human calamity would overbalance his sense of the ludicrous.

To an unprejudiced mind, which takes a calm and impartial survey of the numerous conflicting modes of religious belief, it seems passing strange that men will continue to follow such phantasms. It would appear, if experience did not shew us the contrary, that the very knowledge of the multifarious dogmas taught in different nations, would teach men the uncertainty of the subject, and the extreme difficulty of authenticating any one system of religion. There is no absurdity so gross and incredible, but it has found ardent believers at some time or in some place—the besotted worshipper of the Grand Lama is, at least, as well persuaded in his own mind, as the devout believer in the pope's infallibility; and the latter regards the "reformation" as the pestilent source of heresy, whilst its advocates assure us it was the purifying ordeal, from which the Christian church emerged cleansed from its numerous impurities. It is unnecessary to speak in detail of the various religions of the countless nations and tribes seated in Asia, Africa, and the Isles. The Mahomedan and Christian deplore the errors of this unfortunate portion of God's creation, and with a laudable zeal would introduce the alcoran and the bible, as sovereign remedies for religious heresies. To the intelligent Hindoo, or North American Indian, the idea of God making an express revelation to man, appears an absurd chimera; and when the Christian missionary, who all his life has lived among those that admit the truth of the bible, comes into contact with either of these, he is generally foiled in the controversy. He straightway writes to his employers at home, an account of the wonderful obstinacy of the benighted heathen, and urges the necessity of continuing the pecuniary advances; and, really, in perusing some of these canting epistles, one scarcely knows which to detest most—the unblushing hypocrisy and blind infatuation which can hold out a hope that the Indies will ever be christianized, or the insatiable avarice whose constant cry is still—"give! give!"

A very strong reason against the truth of any one amongst the numerous religions into which mankind are divided, exists in the fact that each by itself is a mere fraction, when compared with the gross population of the world; and no visible interposition of heaven is exerted in behalf of either. To suppose that a beneficent deity would make known his will to a very small portion of his creatures, whilst all the rest were left in ignorance of it, would be to tax him with partiality; and if, as most zealots contend, he would try the great majority by the laws which had only been promulgated to the few, and visit on them the most grievous penalties denounced by most religions, then he would exercise his power most unjustly. Such a God might indeed be feared by the creatures whose destinies he held in his hand; but he could neither be loved nor admired: his conduct would be far worse than that of the fabled being whom Milton seated in heaven and cast down to hell; for the latter, notwithstanding the treatment he receives from gentlemen of the clerical profes-

sion, is, according to their own shewing, a mere instrument in the hands of their God.

Let us suppose, for a moment, that a human being was endowed with power to create a number of animals, and to give to them such a nature, and such instincts, as would lead to particular habits and actions; and then, when such results had happened as the maker had intended and foreseen, and the ephemeral existence of his creatures had terminated in death, he were to re-create them in order to the infliction of torment. Let us suppose that he were to torture them only for a single week, a day, or an hour: would we not say that such a man disgraced his species and outraged humanity? And if the relentless monster threatened to protract the period of agony to a year, a thousand years, or an eternity, could human language furnish us with terms strong enough to express our abhorrence? Yet, such is the course of action attributed to the Christian's God! And we are gravely assured by religious traders, that it is strictly just and eminently merciful! These people are compelled to admit that the *man* who would act in the manner I have described, would merit the execration of his fellow-men: but, say they with gravity imperturbable, "the wonderful ways of God are beyond man's comprehension, and his doings are not to be judged by any human standard!" as though omnipotent power afforded a sanction to cruelty or oppression, and might were a sufficient substitute for right. Truth, justice, and mercy, are immutable principles, and cannot be subverted merely that a religious system shall be upheld. What is cruel or wicked in man, cannot be commended in a God, and we must destroy and forget all the natural motions of the virtuous mind, ere we can admit the truth of a system based upon their desecration.

Even though the truth of Christianity, and its merciless dogmas were indisputable, the character of its author would not be changed by the establishment of that fact. He would still appear, to the apprehension of all men who suffered themselves to think upon the subject, as a being of infinite cruelty as well as infinite power; and, instead of being worthy of praise and gratitude, he could expect nothing else than the indignant complaints and curses of those whom he had called into existence merely to damn them.

It is in vain that Christian teachers endeavor to reconcile their creed with the character of a just and beneficent God—Either their system is false, or their God is a malignant demon. Such is the natural and immediate decision of the rational mind, whenever the scheme is presented to it in a clear and unprejudiced manner. Volumes may be written in support of these dogmas—salaried preachers may gravely expatiate on them, as though their truth was undisputed—and a patient community may read the first and listen to the latter, denying neither:—but still there is a suppressed disbelief of such monstrous notions, and an internal loathing towards the whole system with which they are connected, which cannot be removed with ease; and in addition to these natural dictates of the human mind, there is a redeeming spirit in the advance of education and intelligence, which promises a brighter era for the progress of truth. Thousands have already commenced that examination which is almost always attended with the overthrow of error and falsehood.

Christians themselves are well aware that enquiry is fatal to their system; and, indeed, so forcible is this belief in the minds of their leaders, that they sometimes rather incautiously give it utterance. As an instance of this, I shall conclude by extracting the following sentences from the "Columbian Star," a religious paper of this city, edited by the Rev. Mr. Brantley. Speaking of the late debate between Mr. Campbell and Mr. Owen, the reverend editor observes:—"The propriety of the discussion we consider very questionable. Common people are thus made acquainted with many cavils against Christianity, of which they might have remained in happy ignorance; and it is well known that difficulties are more easily raised than solved."

An indisputable proposition—and every one must admit that it is particularly applicable to the subject upon which the reverend gentleman was commenting.

J. F.

Philadelphia, May 10th, 1829.

DESIGNING POWER.

Mr. Editor—I have made it a rule of life, not to do evil because others do it. Hence, if any undesignedly irritate or hurt my feelings, it is not my design to retaliate: therefore I shall not presume to reply to Cato in a simile of language.

We are all, in a more or less degree, tenacious of our own opinions until we are convinced of their erroneousness or absurdity; and all liable to make wrong conclusions. For my part, I did not design to be uncandid in my remarks on Cato's assertions. If I was, in fact, uncandid, and in an error in my conclusions, I should like to have been corrected in a respectable manner. As the design of the agent through whom we communicate is to discover truth, and unfold useful knowledge, it is from the exhibition and comparison of opinions, that the designed effect can be accomplished.

Hence, from particular indications, I have no great anxiety to enter farther into controversy with Cato; but am constrained to confess, notwithstanding his presumed proof, or more full explanation, that if there is not a striking similarity to the observing mind, between human machinery and the machinery of nature, I am still ignorant of the truth of the case, or labor under a misconception. In human machinery, it is well known that by turning a crank by water power, or steam, or animal force, the machinery is propelled to move, and thus all the designed purposes are accomplished. In the machinery of Nature, by the revolving of the planetary system, all the purposes of Nature are effected; worlds peopled, animals and vegetation brought forth, and returned in their turn and time. Human machinery is subject to the laws of gravity and attraction; and is not the machinery of Nature, or even the laws of Nature limited or confined to the same? All the difference then is brought to this point: that human machinery is moved by a force that is evident to our senses. You say the machinery of Nature is governed by laws, but moves itself. But I think I have reason to believe that a power superior to Nature exists, that turns the great crank of the universe, and gives life to all Nature's animal productions. I do not say this is a fact;

but as my opinion, which involves no other weakness, or bigotry, or prejudice than is common in a more or less degree to all mankind.

In the machinery of Nature, if the force by which it is propelled, is increased or diminished within certain degrees, the production is in the same proportion; but if increased to a certain extreme, it destroys the whole; if this force is entirely discontinued, nothing is produced. In regard to the machine of Nature, it may be ascertained that light and heat issuing from the sun, are the principal agents by which the productions are brought forth and perfected. But if this agency should prevail to an extreme degree, it would destroy as certainly as excessive force in human machinery. But if untimely extinguished, all Nature's productions would soon be closed in the mantle of death.

I have in times past rested with the conclusion that animal life, while in duration, was perpetual motion; but from more scrutinizing investigation, I now think that the motion of the animal machine is no more perpetual than other inanimate machines; the life is the only difference. The force that propels the steam machine is created by the feed, the wood or fuel. When this is discontinued and its force spent, the machine ceases to revolve. The force which propels the animal machine, is the food with which it is fed. When this is discontinued, and the effects spent, of course it will cease to move, the same as the inanimate machine. Hence the life and sensation that is combined with the animal machine, is all the difference between them: whereas this faculty, in the inanimate machine, is supplied by that which has life. Now the grand mystery is—from whence does this life come, or what particular combination of matter, or organization and temperature will produce it? In fact, this seems to be an art beyond all the arts of human ingenuity, and therefore I leave it. Most respectfully yours, OBSERVER.

SATURDAY, MAY 23, 1829.

LECTURES DELIVERED BEFORE THE FREE PRESS ASSOCIATION.

On the Inconsistencies, Absurdities, and Contradictions of the Bible.

By the Secretary.—LECTURE XIX.

Continued from page 265.

In the twenty-third verse of the twenty-second chapter of Exodus, it is said, "Thou shalt not revile the *gods*, nor curse the ruler of thy people." And in the thirteenth verse of the following chapter, it is written, "In all things that I have said unto thee, be circumspect; and make no mention of the name of *other gods*—neither let it be heard out of thy mouth."

We are assured by Jews and Christians, that Judaism was founded in the belief of *one* God. But in the first passage, which I have just read, it is said "thou shalt not revile the *gods*." What gods? Not Jewish gods; for they had but one. These gods, therefore, must have been the gods of other nations, and the prohibition against disrespect, evidently includes an approbation of the character and power of these divinities. In no other light can the injunction, so anxiously given, be viewed, not to *revile*, or use harsh language towards the deities of the surrounding nations. If these were Jewish gods, then were the Jews polytheists. If

they were foreign gods, perhaps the "chosen people" acted on the old adage of being at least *civil* to all, (not forgetting their friend Belzebub) because they did not know into whose hands they might fall.

The latter clause of the verse says, "Thou shalt not curse the ruler of thy people." But if the rulers of the Jewish people were tyrants and despots, why should they not have been the objects of public execration? The only thing which entitled them to escape from this odium, was good character, good principles, and useful actions. But this injunction forbids all inquiry into the character of those appointed to office, after they have been installed. Paul, called the apostle of the Gentiles, told his converts to be "subject to the higher powers—for there is no power (says he) but what is of God." And Jesus is represented as having enjoined on his disciples, the "rendering unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." It has been on these odious maxims that the tyrannical governments of Europe have founded the right, which they constantly exercise, of robbing man of his liberty, and of destroying, as far as their power extends, all science, all virtue, and all happiness; and it is on the same passages, that the priesthood in these United States, have formed a combination to establish a spiritual domination for the purpose of overthrowing our free institutions, exterminating all who do not acknowledge that they are heaven's ambassadors, and reducing the entire population to a state of vassalage, as degrading and abject as that under which the inhabitants of Europe now groan.

The passage in the twenty-third chapter, which forbids making use of the *name* of any other gods, evidently prohibits even silent respect; whereas in the previous passage, there was a distant, silent, and implied respect admitted to be the just right of other gods besides the Jewish Jehovah. What the writer meant by this theological confusion, it is impossible to know; nor is it of much consequence to know; only that it proves the bible could not have been dictated by infinite wisdom, nor by any being capable of communicating instruction to man.

The third verse of the twenty-third chapter of Exodus runs thus, "Thou shalt not countenance a *poor* man in his cause."

This is a fair specimen of the ideas which the "chosen people" of God entertained of the principles of *justice*. It is a doctrine *openly* maintained by the dignataries of the Church in England, though the clergy here, with all their effrontery, have scarcely dared to avow it, that God made man in this world both rich and poor—than which there cannot be a doctrine more calculated to corrupt and demoralize society, and debase the human heart. Take away all the poverty produced by kingcraft and priestcraft; take away all that which results from idleness, profligacy and extravagance; take away that which is the effect of unavoidable misfortune—and there would be very little balance left, which even the Christians could credit to the account of their God. But these spiritual guides wish to make their God the author of poverty, for the purpose of vindicating this bible injunction *not to countenance a poor man in his cause*. This accomplished, it follows, that as God has shown his displeasure in making some men poor, it will surely be right for man to imitate this malevolent being, and shew his displea-

sure against those on whom *divine* power has impressed the terrible marks of poverty.

But if we test this passage by the rules of truth and justice, we shall find it hostile to all moral principle. "According to this doctrine (observes Palmer) a man already poor and unfortunate, is to be made more so by the tyrannical persecutions of society; he is not to be countenanced in his cause; he is not to obtain even common justice. The courts of law are to set their faces against him; and for no other reason but because he is poor, and stands in greater need of justice and humanity than those whose conditions in life are more affluent and fortunate. Society ought to be just to all—to the poor and miserable not rendered so by their own vicious actions; it ought to be sympathetic, humane and beneficent. If it be *holy writ* which contains such injustice, then save us hereafter from all kinds of *holy writs*, and give us legal writs or any kind of writs except those of *holy writs*."

In the twenty-fourth chapter of Exodus, we have another display of the dexterity of Moses to blind the eyes of an ignorant and credulous people. We find him, and seventy-three more theological conjurors, pretending to hold mysterious intercourse with their God on the sacred mount. This mountain seems, indeed, to have been the source, the fountain head from which issued the arbitrary impositions to which Moses subjected the twelve vagrant tribes. In the two first verses of this chapter it is written, "And he said unto Moses, come up unto the lord, thou and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: and worship ye afar off. And Moses alone shall come near the lord; but they shall not come nigh, neither shall the people go up with him."

It is evident that this spiritual aristocracy had no other object in view, than the establishment of a theocratic despotism over a superstitious and refractory race of men. Whether this was the best way of managing such a people, is a point of no importance in the present investigation? From the character of the matters it contains, there is every reason for answering in the negative. Moses, it is said, proceeded alone to the mountain, from which he returned full of important commissions, which he pretended were delivered to him by the mouth of Jehovah, and with whom he had much conversation. Now, supposing any of our legislators, were to set out for the Catskill mountains, and after remaining there for some time, should return to this city, or proceed to Albany, full of instructions and commands which, he said, he had received from a deity, to be communicated to the people of this state, would he be believed, or his legation be considered as divine? No—I will venture to say that no one in his senses would give credit to him. All his pretensions would be laughed at, and his efforts would be stamped with imposture and fanaticism.

Why then should we believe a story of a similar nature concerning Moses and the Jews? Is it because it has been transmitted down from a supposed high antiquity, and is sanctioned by the errors of education, and by authority? Yes—this is the true and only reason that can be given. There is no more ground for believing that Moses was commissioned by a God on a mountain, or any where else, to communicate laws to the Jews, than that this should be done in the present day by

any one, be he even a priest of the highest order, who should arrogate similar pretensions.

It appears from the thirty-second chapter of Exodus, that during the long absence of Moses (for he is said to have spent forty days on the mount) the people became extremely impatient for his return, and suspected that he had abandoned them altogether; for it is said in the first verse, "And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him: up make us Gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him." In compliance with this demand, it appears that Aaron was not long in setting about the business of manufacturing a new deity. Like all other priests, his principal object was to turn the superstitious propensities of his countrymen to a profitable account. Accordingly, he devised the following plan of plundering them of their property: "And Aaron said unto them, break off the golden ear rings which are in the ears of your wives, and of your daughters, and bring them to me."

With these ear rings he pretended to form a golden calf, which was afterwards thrown into the fire, and burnt up—then ground into powder—then thrown on the waters—and afterwards given to the Jewish people to drink.

What a ridiculous story is here got up. The mere tyro in science must be aware of its deceptive character. How did Aaron melt this gold? Was he acquainted with the principles of chemistry; or did he bring the metal into a state of fusion by a miracle? If he did, then miracles were no proof, even in those days of wonders, of the divine authority of his brother's mission; for he, Aaron, demonstrated in this transaction, that they could be performed in support of *calf* worship as well as to support the worship of Jehovah.

Again: how did Aaron afterwards grind the gold to powder; and by what means did he gather it up after it was cast into the water? What was the object of making the people drink of this golden liquid? Was it for the purpose of curing their idolatry; or was it intended as a punishment for deserting the worship of that deity towards whom they had shown so much ingratitude? These are questions which the priesthood might be usefully employed in solving, if it was the object of that body to rend the veil from truth, and exhibit it in all its native charms. But this is not what they aim at. Their only study is to obtain the means of living luxuriously, which they cannot do but by perpetuating the errors of antiquity. Were they any way accessory to opening the eyes of the multitude to the folly of confiding in those errors, their craft would be laid open, and the would be compelled, against their inclinations, to pursue a more honest and honorable calling.

In the nineteenth verse of this chapter it is said, that "the anger of Moses waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hand and brake them." This was paying a poor compliment to his God for the condescension he showed, in coming down on the mount, and writing the law with his own hand, on these very tables. If the people had offended Moses, he ought, at least, to have restrained his anger so far as to have held sacred

the workmanship of that deity whom he extolled above all other Gods. So far from this, he displayed the most irascible passions, and completely belied the character of meekness, attempted to be given of him in another part of these writings.

The consequence of this departure of the "chosen people" from the worship of Jehovah, and preferring a calf in his stead, is thus stated in the twenty-sixth verse of the thirty-second chapter of Exodus—"Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, who is on the lord's side? Let him come unto me. And the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said unto them, thus saith the lord God of Israel, put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate through the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor."

Could a mandate more horrible than this be imagined?—Yet the bloody and ferocious decree is charged on a God whom Christians assure us is abundant in mercy, long suffering, and unwilling that any should perish, but that all should turn to him and live!

Verse twenty-eighth. "And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses, and there fell of the people that day about three-thousand men:" brothers, companions, and friends—all fall a sacrifice, without distinction, and without mercy. Is there an individual in this assembly that can offer, or even imagine, a palliation for a crime so abominable? What!—three-thousand human beings put to death in cold blood for expressing a wish that they should have a leader to guide them through the wilderness, in place of the one who had to all appearance deserted them! But the most atrocious business was the sparing of the priests, and making them the executioners of the bloody mandate, when it is evident from the whole story, that they aided and abetted Aaron in setting up the golden calf, which was made a pretext for so indiscriminate a slaughter. And where, I would ask, was the *justice* of overlooking the crime of the *principal* in this transaction, the high priest himself, while his ignorant and unfortunate dupes were abandoned to their fate? But why speak of *justice* in any thing in which the priesthood are concerned. Here an example was given them, of which they have never failed to profit; and, on all occasions, to refer to as a justification, when they were detected in plundering nations, and deluging the earth with blood.

It might have been supposed, even had the priesthood never participated in the guilt of the Jewish nation, that the slaughter of three thousand of the latter, would have satiated the vengeance of the wrathful Moses, and his no less choleric deity. But so far from this, it appears from the thirty-fourth verse of this chapter, that "the lord *plagued* the people, because they made the calf which Aaron made." Here we have another contradiction and absurdity. The *people* are said to have *made* the calf, which, in the very same sentence, is said (and truly so if any thing in the bible is true) to have been made by Aaron!

To be continued.

293.

Mr. Owen.—The superstitionists are elated at, what they assert to be, a victory obtained by Mr. Campbell, in the public discussion with

Mr. Owen at Cincinnati. If the statements of the enemies of the latter gentleman are to be believed, he has indeed sustained a signal defeat. But as we place no reliance on the testimony of men who are evidently interested in the promulgation of error, we cannot give them credit in the present instance, until we have Mr. Owen's acknowledgment that he actually had the worst of the argument; or until we peruse the report of the proceedings, announced for publication. We are the more convinced that his adversaries will never do him justice, on having observed in the last number of the "*Western Monthly Review*," a long article from the pen of the editor, in which he censures Mr. Owen in very unmeasured terms. This was the more reprehensible, as the writer of the article was one of the seven umpires, selected to keep order during the discussion, and must have been aware, that any thing coming from his pen was calculated to prejudge the question before the public was in possession of the debate, by which alone a correct opinion can be formed. The following statement by Mr. Owen will enable our readers to judge of the candor of this assailant:—

"Our literary giant of the west, in the last number of his *Review*, has amused some of his readers with a fanciful report of the recent discussion, in this city, between Mr. Campbell and myself.

"His intellectual readers, however, expected from him a *correct* statement of the twelve fundamental laws of human nature, which he mentions so frequently without saying what they are, and that he would tell them also whether they were true or not.

"But no! this eccentric description is, all of it, an attempt to please the imagination at the expense of the judgment, and to lead the enquiring and sober mind astray from the real importance of the subject.

"My worthy friend, like my late opponent in the discussion, well knew, that it would not do to grapple with these stubborn facts, upon the truth or falsehood of which, the questions under consideration entirely depend. And being true, all that can be said by the advocates of all the religions in the world, becomes as "*chaff before the wind*."

"My two friends clearly discovered that these facts were too true to have their validity impugned by mortal man, and therefore the reviewer, in imitation of the champion of the Christian faith, has passed them over in a very dexterous manner, by a "*Kentucky manœuvre*," proving thereby the sandy and tottering foundation of the cause which they vainly wish to support.

"Many similar attempts will, no doubt, be made by those who are influenced to desire to retain the prejudices which they have been compelled to receive from their infancy: the errors of which, by the unchanging laws of our nature, they cannot of themselves control, or be relieved from, except by some additional evidence presented to their minds, which, previously they could not foresee or foreknow to exist.

"As the *Western Monthly Review* is, deservedly, widely circulated, the independent editors of the *American Press*, who feel a desire that truth shall be elicited on these momentous subjects, who wish to give fair play to both parties, will confer a benefit upon society by inserting this reply to the reviewer.

ROBERT OWEN."

Cincinnati, May, 1829.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A Dialogue between M. Jurieu and a Burgomaster of Rotterdam.

Continued from page 271.

Jurieu. Ought not the magistrate to employ the sword for the defence of religion?

Burgomaster. Yes, when religion is attacked by the sword.

Jur. Is there no remedy for speaking and writing against religion?

Burg. Yes, that of speaking and writing; and for this purpose are the clergy appointed and maintained. These are the only arms which the gospel and common sense give you.

Jur. Sir, I must beg your pardon: preaching and writing have no efficacy upon hardened and reprobate hearts. Where reproof is ineffectual, we must have recourse to severity and human terrors.

Burg. Human terrors may indeed bring man under the power of the clergy; and that is the only use the clergy do or can make of them: but it is a contradiction, to say that ever human terrors made a Christian: the grace of God can alone do that. Now, will you say that fury and dungeons teach men Christianity; or that the grace of God is to be whipped or tortured into a man?

Jur. No; but they may be the means of humbling audacious sinners, and of begetting in them a sense of religion and submission.

Burg. That word submission has a shrewd meaning: but as to religion, if that is to be propagated by such means, there is little or no use of a clergy, but only of prisons, lictors, tortures, and executioners. And a troop of dragoons may do as well or better than a troop of ministers, when their admonitions are ineffectual.

Jur. I mean no such thing.

Burg. What then do you mean?

Jur. Only that you should restrain notorious gainsayers, and punish blasphemers.

Burg. That is, every man who gainsays and blasphemes your opinions.

Jur. True, if thou mean my orthodox opinions.

Burg. That is the same thing. Every man thinks his opinions orthodox. Now in asking for this restraint and punishment, do you consider the consequences of what you ask? You really ask for an inquisition.

Jur. You grievously mistake me, sir; I abhor the Inquisition.

Burg. The popish inquisition you do: but do you disclaim an inquisition of your own, or an inquisition in behalf of your religion?

Jur. You may perceive, sir, I only seek to have a restraint laid upon Mr. Bayle.

Burg. Suppose that restraint will not do: what must be done next?

Jur. Your own polity will tell you that. You must punish him: he disobeys the magistrate.

Burg. This is very casuistical; but let us see the end of it. Suppose that this punishment proves still too weak, and he still goes on?

Jur. Your government affords you a remedy.

Burg. Yes, we can put him to death. So that here is a restraint, punishment, and death, for religion, or for a question about religion. What is an inquisition, if this be not?

Jur. There will be no occasion of going so far.

Burg. But you say we must go so far, if there be occasion; and we actually see that there is almost always occasion: no severity but the last severity will do in these cases. The very beginning implies the extremity; so that whoever calls for any punishment in matters of religion and speculation, calls for the highest punishment; and Mr. Jurieu, a protestant divine, who has fled from the prosecution in France, where no religion but the popish is tolerated, and has taken sanctuary in Holland, where all religions are tolerated, calls upon the Dutch magistrates for persecution against a brother refugee, and a professed calvinist, after having, for many years, and by many books, reproached the French government in the bitterest terms, for persecuting the calvinists. How will you reconcile this contradiction in your conduct?

Jur. Easily, by maintaining that the popish religion is a false religion, and ours the true.

Burg. The papists make the same compliment to themselves, and the same charge against you. I am a protestant, and I protest against persecution, as well as against other parts of popery. I think that every religion which persecutes, is a false religion; or rather, that every persecutor is a papist: and that every hardship or restraint for religious notions, is persecution.

Jur. You carry this reasoning very far. I hope you will allow the Christian religion to take care of itself.

Burg. Yes, by all means that are Christian: but you may as easily unite the spirit of Christianity to the spirit of paganism, as preserve Christianity by the fierce and wicked ways that were taken to preserve paganism. Neither Christ, nor his apostles, ever applied to the magistrate to fall upon unbelievers with the civil sword, nor even to stop their mouths.

Jur. They needed not: they did miracles to support them; and they would not apply to unbelieving magistrates.

Burg. And how came you, without miracles, to apply to us? as you shew neither miracles nor infallibility, we know you liable to be mistaken; as we are sure we should be, if we practise severities for a religion which forbids them, and became mighty without them.

To be continued.

Modern Materialism.—This is the title of a work in one vol. 8vo, which has just made its appearance, from the pen of Dr. Knowlton, of Massachusetts. It is dedicated "to the friends of truth and intellectual freedom," and from what we have perused of its contents, we consider it deserving of their patronage. To men of science, in particular, it cannot but be acceptable, as it displays a knowledge of the human system rarely to be met with in any of the numerous publications now issuing from the press.

The book, extending to 448 pages, is for sale at the office of the Correspondent; price \$1 50. bound, and gilt.

Bible and Tract Societies.—We place the following facts on record for after animadversion: It was stated in the report read at the 13th anniversary of the "American Bible Society," held in this city, on the 14th inst., that "the receipts of the Society during the 13th year, exclusive of loans, were \$107,684—42; and the expenditures, \$123,681—63. The receipts of the past year exceed those of the preceding, \$31,804—40; and the expenditures, \$40,445—69."

"The American Tract Society," also held an annual celebration on the 12th inst; from the report read at which it appeared, "that the receipts of the Society the first year after its establishment, were \$10,000; the second year, \$30,000; the third year, \$45,000; the fourth year, \$60,000; and its issues were, the first year, 1,000,000 of Tracts; the second year 3,000,000; the third year 5,000,000; and the fourth year 6,000,000."

Free Press Association.—The meetings of the Association are now held in the Bowery Long Room, opposite the Theatre, every Sunday afternoon, at 3 o'clock, for lectures; and in the evening, at 7 o'clock for debates.

The *third* of a series of lectures *on the proofs of the existence of Jesus Christ, and the origin of Christianity*, will be delivered to-morrow afternoon—by Mr. Houston.

In the evening, the debate will be resumed on the following question:—*Is the Christian religion better calculated to promote happiness and good order in society than any other system?*

Tickets of admission to the debate, (to be had at the door) three cents each. Ladies free.

Scientific lectures.—The lectures on Science are continued semi-monthly during the summer.

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